

**State of Alaska  
FY2004 Governor's Operating Budget**

**Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Vocational Rehabilitation  
Budget Request Unit Budget Summary**

## Vocational Rehabilitation Budget Request Unit

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### BRU Mission

The mission of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to assist individuals with disabilities to overcome barriers to employment and to maintain suitable employment.

Proposed Change:

The mission of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.

### BRU Services Provided

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is a combined federal/state program under the authority of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998. The division works to assist in accomplishing the individualized goals of each person with a disability. A full array of vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services, support and assistance in employment, assistive technology, and referrals are offered. In partnership with other state agencies, private sector businesses, vendors, and non-profit organizations, individuals are assisted and encouraged in realizing their potential and personal independence as full participants and citizens in their community. Employers are provided trained and willing workers able to do the job. The division also provides training to employers on hiring practice changes and training and assistance regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The division adjudicates claims on behalf of the Social Security Administration for Title II and Title XVI applicants for disability benefits and provides referrals for services. In addition, the division is the agency responsible for executive branch compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Administrative Order #129.

### BRU Goals and Strategies

1) PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES THAT WILL ENABLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO GET JOBS.

\* The division will deliver direct vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities through a statewide structure of regional and branch offices.

\* Access to information and services provided by the Division will be available on the Internet.

\* The division will maintain offices with other agencies providing employment services including the Employment Security Division, Job Training Partnership contractors, the Division of Public Assistance, and other non-profit organizations in "One-Stop" job centers in Ketchikan, Juneau, Anchorage, Wasilla, Eagle River, Bethel, Kenai and Fairbanks.

\* Services for Native Alaskans will be coordinated with Native organizations including Bristol Bay Native Association, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Tlingit-Haida Central Council, Cook Inlet Native Association, Kodiak Island Native Association, Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association, and the Association of Village Council Presidents (Bethel).

2) EXPAND THE EXPERTISE AND SKILLS OF REHABILITATION PERSONNEL.

\* Training programs will be designed and provided which will enable personnel to function in their jobs with improved knowledge of disability issues and which will correct identified deficiencies.

3) ENABLE ALASKANS WITH DISABILITIES TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY IN THE COMMUNITY OF THEIR CHOICE.

\* The division will deliver independent living services statewide through grant agreements with private non-profit

independent living centers.

\* Specialized independent living services will be provided to older individuals who are blind, through regional grants in Southeast, Gulf Coast, Anchorage/Mat-Su/Southwest, and the Northwest regions.

4) ENABLE ELIGIBLE ALASKANS WITH DISABILITIES TO RECEIVE SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS.

\* The division will adjudicate claims for Social Security benefits by obtaining medical and vocational evidence for claimants that will provide adequate information to determine eligibility for benefits.

5) PROVIDE SERVICES THROUGH SPECIAL PROJECTS, WHICH WILL ENHANCE AND SUPPORT THE GENERAL MISSION OF THE DIVISION AND MEET THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

\* Using Supported Employment funding, the division will place and train severely disabled individuals in competitive employment positions.

\* Sign language interpreter services will be provided through three regional grants to non-profit organizations that will respond to requests for interpreter referrals for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

\* The Alaska Work Incentive grant will allow the division to improve the employability, employment and career advancement of people with disabilities through enhanced service delivery in the One-Stop delivery system established under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

\* The Customized Employment Grant will build the capacity of statewide One-Stop Job Centers to effectively serve people with severe disabilities through a customized employment approach. This will provide for an individualized employment relationship based on the strengths, needs, and interests of the person with a disability, and will be designed to meet the needs of the employer. It will also use the expertise and services of One-Stop partners and other essential programs to enable people with disabilities to secure customized employment.

6) ENABLE ACCESS TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO RESIDE THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

\* The division will provide grant funding for an Assistive Technology Alliance.

7) ASSURE COMPLIANCE OF ALL AGENCIES IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF STATE GOVERNMENT WITH TITLE I AND II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT.

\* Training programs will be provided for program managers.

\* Updated information will be provided on the status of state facilities audited for ADA compliance.

### **Key BRU Issues for FY2003 – 2004**

\* Provide greater capacity in the One-Stop delivery system to effectively serve people with disabilities;

\* Continue to support counselors in meeting the federal requirements of a Masters Degree;

\* Increase efficiency and effectiveness under the Unified State Plan prompted by the Workforce Investment Act;

\* Continue the advancement of Informed Choice in all facets of Vocational Rehabilitation services; and

\* Implement the Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act of 1999.

### **Major BRU Accomplishments in 2002**

\* Provided services to 530 Alaskans with disabilities that enabled them to go to work and earn an average of \$22,018 per year;

- \* Increased the involvement of the 4,209 individuals with disabilities served in FY 2002 in taking a lead role in their rehabilitation services;
- \* Expanded the presence of Division of Vocational Rehabilitation staff in Alaska Job Centers throughout the state;
- \* Incorporated more accessible technology to determine the aptitudes and interests of people with disabilities in their career planning and employing community based job assessments; and
- \* Continued collaborating with other employment program partners at the Alaska Job Centers.

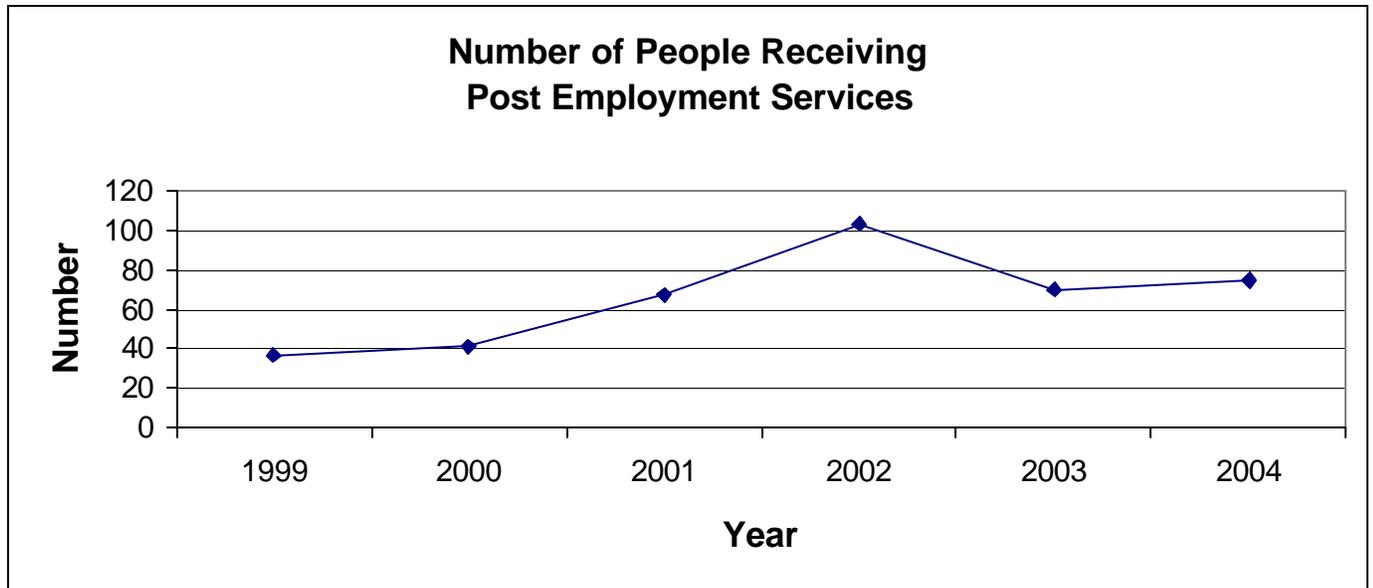
### Key Performance Measures for FY2004

**Measure:**

**The number of people served in post-employment services.**

Sec 92(b)(1) Ch 124 SLA 2002(HB 515)

**Alaska's Target & Progress:**



The division provides clients post-employment services necessary to maintain, regain, or advance in employment. For FY01, 68 clients and in FY02, 103 clients received post-employment services. In FY03, a target of 70 people will be provided post-employment services and 75 in FY04. In FY04 resources will be managed to provide post-employment services to all clients requiring services to maintain employment.

**Benchmark Comparisons:**

Post-employment services provided by other state vocational rehabilitation programs vary from state to state. Comparison between programs is not meaningful due to the nature of the services, diverse labor markets, and incomparable client populations.

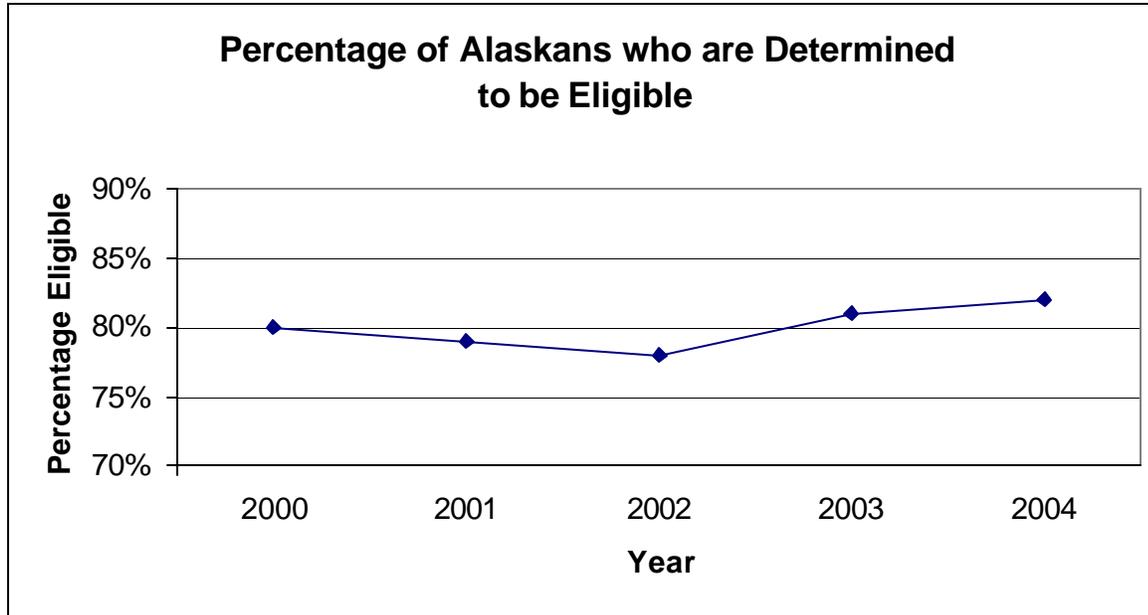
**Background and Strategies:**

Post-employment services are limited in scope and duration with the intention of ensuring that the employment outcome remains consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests. Vocational Rehabilitation counselors determine when post-employment services are required. All clients requiring post-employment services will receive services. Vocational Rehabilitation will continue to offer training to counselors to recognize post-employment challenges and identify allowable services.

**Measure:**

**The percentage of Alaskans who apply for services compared to the number determined eligible and served.**

Sec 92(b)(2) Ch 124 SLA 2002(HB 515)

**Alaska's Target & Progress:**

The division is committed to continuing to serve all eligible clients. In FY01, 79.0% and in FY02 78% of Alaskans who applied for services received services as part of their Individual Employment Plan. No client eligible for services was denied services. In FY03 the program will work to increase the percentage of Alaskans who apply and become eligible to 82% and 83% in FY04.

**Benchmark Comparisons:**

At the current time the Workforce Act of 1988 doesn't collect this data from each state. Until such data is collected a performance level to use for comparison from another state is not available. A benchmark will be determined when additional data becomes available.

**Background and Strategies:**

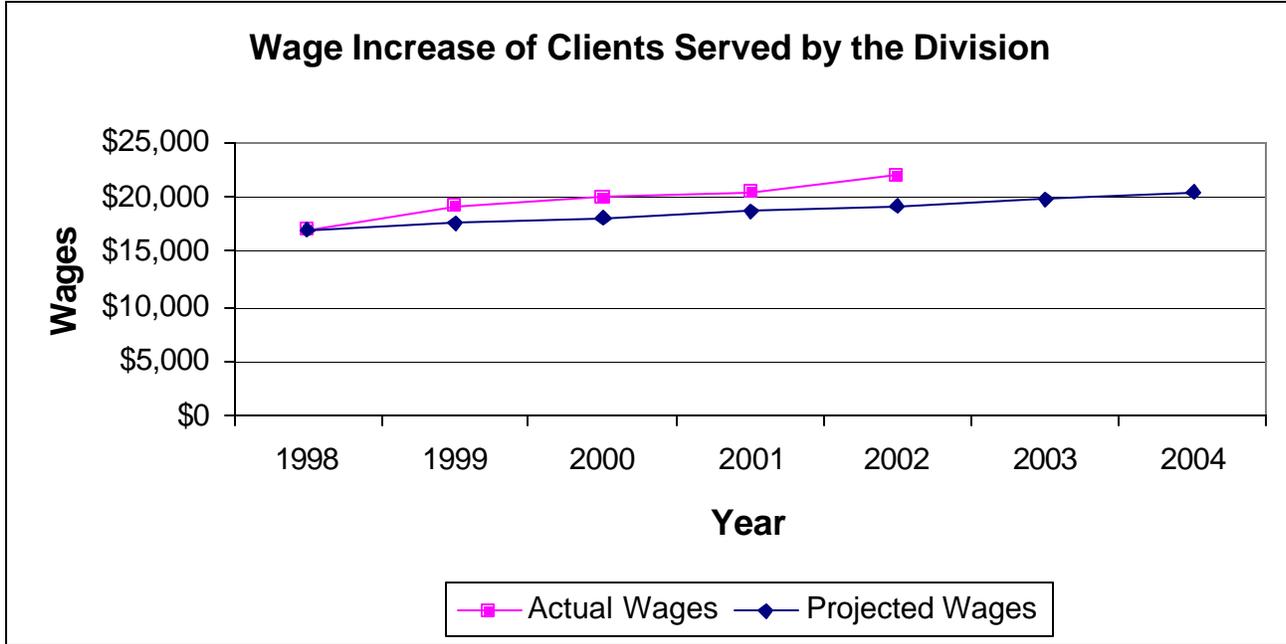
Individuals interested in the program attend an orientation on the services provided by the program. The orientation process screens individuals to determine if they need Vocational Rehabilitation services or services from other Workforce Investment programs. When orientation strategies and materials are presented effectively, the number of applicants determined eligible increases. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors review applications and conduct assessments for determining eligibility of services.

**Measure:**

**The increase in wages of clients who are served by the division.**

Sec 92(b)(3) Ch 124 SLA 2002(HB 515)

**Alaska's Target & Progress:**



The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation works to increase the annual wages of clients served. The average annual wage earned by Alaskans with disabilities that received services increased from \$20,084 in FY00 to \$20,425 in FY01, and \$22,017 in FY02. These amounts exceeded our targets for those years.

For FY03 and FY04 the program will work to maintain an average annual wage that is at least a 3% increase for each year starting with the FY98 base year. This would be targets of \$19,780 in FY03 and \$20,370 in FY04.

**Benchmark Comparisons:**

In FY98 the program established a base amount of \$17,062 for the average annual earnings of individuals with disabilities placed in the workforce.

**Background and Strategies:**

The program will consider that an individual has achieved an employment outcome when the following have been met:

- a) The provision of services under the individual's Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) contributes to the achievement of the employment.
- b) The employment is in the most integrated setting possible and is consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.
- c) The individual has maintained the employment for a period of at least 90 days.

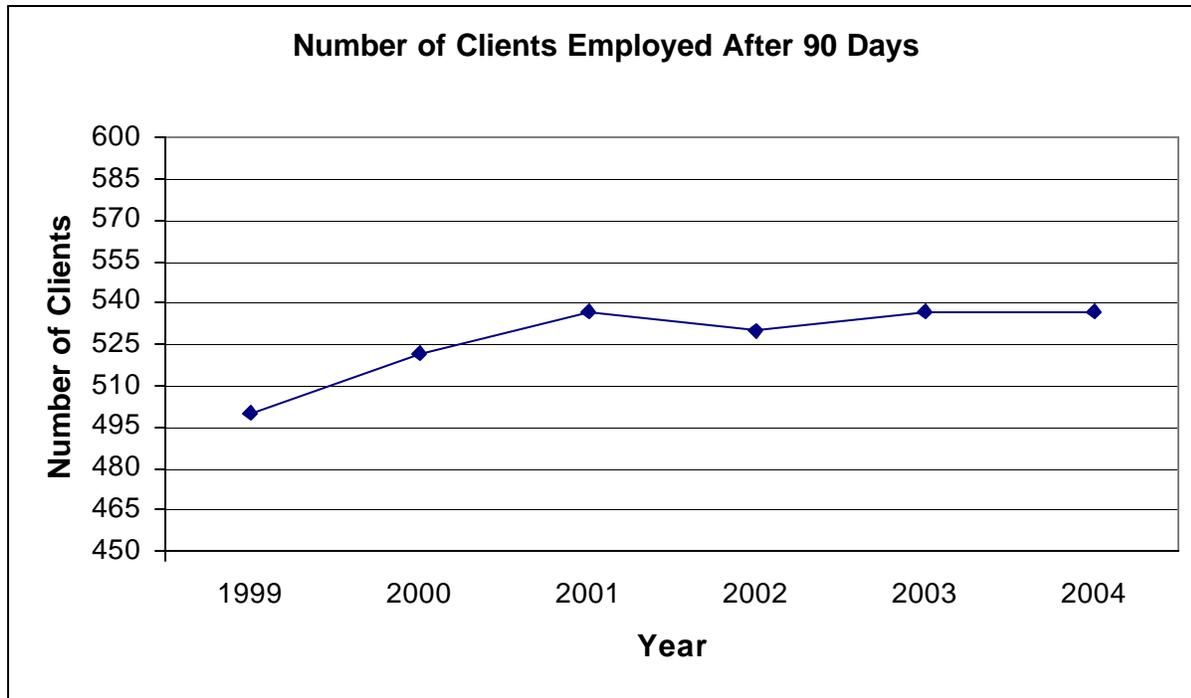
Counselors will emphasize placing clients in well paying jobs with employee benefits.

**Measure:**

**The number of individuals who enter and retain employment for at least 90 days after receiving services from the division.**

Sec 92(b)(4) Ch 124 SLA 2002(HB 515)

**Alaska's Target & Progress:**



The division has monitored this measure for many years as it is also a federal measure. Since FY95 the lowest number reported was in FY96 when 494 individuals were employed and a high was reported in FY97 with 553 individuals employed. The program successfully assisted 537 individuals in FY01 and in FY02, 530 individuals. The division projects a reasonable target to be 540 individuals should enter and retain employment for at least 90 days after receiving services from the division based on data collected and budgets funded at a maintenance level.

**Benchmark Comparisons:**

It is difficult to compare this measure with other state vocational rehabilitation programs due to differences in, geographical location, job markets, and population demographics.

**Background and Strategies:**

Services will be delivered through partners in the Alaska Job Centers, Native organizations and other non-profit organizations. The program addresses job and career opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market by engaging the talent and leadership of private industry and the public sector as partners in the rehabilitation process, to identify competitive job and career opportunities and the skills needed to perform such jobs, and create practical job and career readiness and training programs.

**Measure:**

**The number of individuals placed in jobs who require additional services from the division after one full year.**

Sec 92(b)(5) Ch 124 SLA 2002(HB 515)

**Alaska's Target & Progress:**

During FY02 the division provided additional services to 32 individuals after they were successfully employed for one year. FY02 is the first year data has been collected for the measure. The division will use FY02 number as a baseline and will establish a target when adequate data becomes available.

**Benchmark Comparisons:**

At the current time the Workforce Act of 1998 doesn't collect this data from each state. Until such data is collected a performance level to use for comparison from another state is not available. A benchmark will be determined when additional data becomes available.

**Background and Strategies:**

Individuals who return for services more than one year after their case is closed in successful employment, and who

are not receiving post-employment services, are required to reapply for services. If determined eligible, a new Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) is established. Vocational Rehabilitation Councilors provide counseling and guidance services which result in employment outcomes that are described in the individual's IPE, are consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, and in the most integrated setting possible consistent with the individual's informed choice.

**Vocational Rehabilitation**  
**BRU Financial Summary by Component**

*All dollars in thousands*

|  | FY2002 Actuals |                 |                |                 | FY2003 Authorized |                 |                |                 | FY2004 Governor |                 |                |                 |
|--|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
|  | General Funds  | Federal Funds   | Other Funds    | Total Funds     | General Funds     | Federal Funds   | Other Funds    | Total Funds     | General Funds   | Federal Funds   | Other Funds    | Total Funds     |
| <b><u>Formula Expenditures</u></b>     | None.          |                 |                |                 |                   |                 |                |                 |                 |                 |                |                 |
| <b><u>Non-Formula Expenditures</u></b> |                |                 |                |                 |                   |                 |                |                 |                 |                 |                |                 |
| Voc Rehab Administration               | 168.6          | 1,107.7         | 59.3           | 1,335.6         | 171.0             | 1,279.8         | 20.8           | 1,471.6         | 138.1           | 1,291.4         | 52.4           | 1,481.9         |
| Client Services                        | 3,168.5        | 7,834.6         | 360.9          | 11,364.0        | 3,203.9           | 8,727.4         | 365.0          | 12,296.3        | 3,204.6         | 8,854.5         | 431.3          | 12,490.4        |
| Federal Training Grant                 | 5.6            | 39.7            | 0.0            | 45.3            | 5.6               | 50.7            | 0.0            | 56.3            | 0.0             | 0.0             | 0.0            | 0.0             |
| Independent Living                     | 676.9          | 584.5           | 198.1          | 1,459.5         | 676.9             | 770.8           | 145.1          | 1,592.8         | 58.1            | 770.8           | 0.0            | 828.9           |
| Rehabilitation                         |                |                 |                |                 |                   |                 |                |                 |                 |                 |                |                 |
| Disability Determination               | 0.0            | 4,231.1         | 148.2          | 4,379.3         | 0.0               | 4,926.4         | 201.2          | 5,127.6         | 0.0             | 4,945.8         | 202.1          | 5,147.9         |
| Special Projects                       | 80.7           | 523.2           | 106.7          | 710.6           | 85.8              | 1,526.6         | 154.1          | 1,766.5         | 85.8            | 1,528.8         | 154.1          | 1,768.7         |
| Assistive Technology                   | 0.0            | 440.2           | 0.0            | 440.2           | 0.0               | 471.7           | 96.0           | 567.7           | 0.0             | 473.3           | 96.0           | 569.3           |
| Americans With Disabilities            | 0.0            | 0.0             | 177.3          | 177.3           | 0.0               | 0.0             | 194.7          | 194.7           | 0.0             | 0.0             | 195.6          | 195.6           |
| <b>Totals</b>                          | <b>4,100.3</b> | <b>14,761.0</b> | <b>1,050.5</b> | <b>19,911.8</b> | <b>4,143.2</b>    | <b>17,753.4</b> | <b>1,176.9</b> | <b>23,073.5</b> | <b>3,486.6</b>  | <b>17,864.6</b> | <b>1,131.5</b> | <b>22,482.7</b> |

**Vocational Rehabilitation**

**Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2004**

The reduction in funding to the Independent Living Rehabilitation program will result in reductions to Independent Living Center staff, expenditures and services to clients with disabilities. It is estimated that the program will be able to serve 1,370 clients.

**Vocational Rehabilitation**

**Summary of BRU Budget Changes by Component**

**From FY2003 Authorized to FY2004 Governor**

*All dollars in thousands*

|  | <u>General Funds</u> | <u>Federal Funds</u> | <u>Other Funds</u> | <u>Total Funds</u> |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>FY2003 Authorized</b>   | <b>4,143.2</b>       | <b>17,753.4</b>      | <b>1,176.9</b>     | <b>23,073.5</b>    |
| <b>Adjustments which will continue current level of service:</b> |                      |                      |                    |                    |
| -Voc Rehab Administration  | 0.1                  | 11.6                 | 0.2                | 11.9               |
| -Client Services   | 5.6                  | 127.1                | 0.0                | 132.7              |
| -Federal Training Grant  | -5.6                 | -50.7                | 0.0                | -56.3              |
| -Disability Determination  | 0.0                  | 19.4                 | 0.9                | 20.3               |
| -Special Projects  | 0.0                  | 2.2                  | 0.0                | 2.2                |
| -Assistive Technology  | 0.0                  | 1.6                  | 0.0                | 1.6                |
| -Americans With Disabilities                                     | 0.0                  | 0.0                  | 0.9                | 0.9                |
| <b>Proposed budget decreases:</b>                                |                      |                      |                    |                    |
| -Voc Rehab Administration  | -33.0                | 0.0                  | 0.0                | -33.0              |
| -Client Services   | -4.9                 | 0.0                  | 0.0                | -4.9               |
| -Independent Living Rehabilitat                                  | -618.8               | 0.0                  | -145.1             | -763.9             |
| <b>Proposed budget increases:</b>                                |                      |                      |                    |                    |
| -Voc Rehab Administration  | 0.0                  | 0.0                  | 31.4               | 31.4               |
| -Client Services   | 0.0                  | 0.0                  | 66.3               | 66.3               |
| <b>FY2004 Governor</b>   | <b>3,486.6</b>       | <b>17,864.6</b>      | <b>1,131.5</b>     | <b>22,482.7</b>    |